

GRANDMAS OF TODAY

THEY KEEP IN THE RACE WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE END.

The Old Fashioned Grandmother, the One Who Placidly Sat in the Chimney Corner Darning Stockings, Is a Thing of the Past.

I was bemoaning the fact that I had never known my grandmothers. One died before I was born and the other when I was a few months old. I thought it would be so comforting to have a grandmother because they always regarded their grandchildren as being incapable of doing wrong. At least they were sure to multiply one's virtues and minimize faults. Their chief object in life, as I picture them, was to minister to their descendants' comfort, to make the crooked places straight. The grandmother of my fancy would keep my clothes in repair, darn the stockings, knit plenty of washers and silk mittens, surprise me with my favorite dishes, laugh at my jokes and generally submerge her life in the affairs of mine. What was I going to do in return for all this unselfish devotion? I would be her granddaughter. That, according to the old traditions, was quite enough compensation.

I was holding forth, exploiting my views and desires on the grandmother question in the presence of one of those people who delight to take a person down and make him feel cheap, especially if they imagine one is posing as younger than the family Bible records. This individual spoke up and said: "Why, if your grandmothers were living they would be so glad that they would be mummified. Instead of darning your stockings, knitting your mittens, they would be blind, deaf and imbecile. You would have to tend them with greater slavishness than a mother a newborn babe, and without the sweet recompense in the latter case. When people become imbecile with age, they grow repulsive, and the prolonging of this state is dreadful, while each day the unfolding of a budding life is filled with mysterious delights."

Of course I did not want a grandmother that was deaf, blind and imbecile. I thought I would drop the subject, as it appeared to be getting personal. But my companion continued: "Besides, could it be possible in the order of things for you to have a vigorous, industrious, capable grandmother, she would not be sitting at the chimney corner darning your stockings. She would be out attending to her lodge or club business, visiting the millinery openings, ordering a fashionable gown, playing cards or attending a high tea. The old fashioned grandmother is as much a thing of the past as the spinning wheel, the canalboat, stagecoach, making candles and family rendered soap."

I protested that I did not believe my grandmothers would be of the modern pattern. I had heard my mother tell often of how completely her mother lost her taste for society and outside affairs after she had grandchildren. She had raised a large family, but these reproductions were just as much a delight as had been the originals. She infinitely preferred their society to that of grown people. Their prattle, school experiences, little ambitions filled her life completely. She was constantly pawning surprises for them by making animal cakes, individual pies, candy, aprons, hood, doll clothes.

"Yes, but if she lived now she would be different. The air she would breathe is filled with assertive germs which declare that every woman owes it to herself to have a career and stand at the helm and steer it to the very end. She most not allow her life to be submerged in that of her own children, as they make their appearance rather unwillingly, but must have outside missions. As soon as her offspring is married off, which is accomplished with as great dispatch as diplomacy can secure, then she is free to carry out her schemes and natural desires untrammeled."

"Perhaps you are right," I replied. "Such a grandmother as this would be no comfort to me as a grandmother, while she might be a most helpful friend, and I could be proud of her position in the literary, artistic or philanthropic world as her tastes might dictate her pursuit."

A grandmother of my acquaintance said to me not long ago: "It would be a great trial to me to have my grandchildren or any children in the house with me now. I could not adapt myself to their demands and interruptions. I have raised my family and now want my time for individual pursuits." This woman has special talents and necessities for using them, and in her case these feelings may not seem unnatural. But this is much the sentiment that possesses the grandmothers of the age who have no special missions or avocations outside the domestic circle. If they have means, they buy handsome gifts for their grandchildren and wish them to have all the advantages possible that do not represent personal self sacrifice or curtailment of freedom of action.

Women are imbued with the spirit of the age, which demands that there shall be no old ladies with caps and shawls who stay at home and guard the fireside, but that they must keep in the race with the young people to the very end—Susan W. Ball in *Terre Haute Gazette*.

Betrayed by His Feet. Sherlock Holmes—I have not looked around, but a very tall man just came in and sat down in the opera chair behind me.

Miss Marvel—It is true! Say, you do the most wonderful things. Now, tell me how you know without looking of the tall man's presence.

Sherlock Holmes—His feet are sticking through under my chair.—Ohio State Journal.

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